

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 PPT-02 L-03 H-03 PRS-01

RSR-01 RSC-01 SS-15 NSC-10 EURE-00 CPR-02 /068 W

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P 161254Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 396

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: UR US CASC CPRS (DAVIS, WILLIAM A.)

SUBJ: DETENTION OF AMCITS AT MOSCOW AIRPORT

REF: STATE 138515

1. WEEKEND DETENTION OF MR. AND MRS. DAVIS AT MOSCOW AIRPORT TRANSIT HOTEL, ABOUT WHICH EMBASSY HAD NOT EARLIER BEEN INFORMED, IS IN KEEPING WITH LONG STANDING SOVIET PRACTICE OF TEMPORARILY CONFINING VISITORS WHO ARRIVE WITHOUT PROPER VISAS OR WITH IMPROPERLY DATED VISAS. DEPARTMENT RECORDS WILL SHOW CONSOFFS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN RECENT YEARS IN MANY SUCH CASES AS NUMBERS OF US TOURISTS, BUSINESSMEN AND OFFICIAL VISITORS HAVE INCREASED. MOST CASES ARE RESOLVED WITHOUT OFFICIAL INTERVENTION , HOWEVER, AS INTOURIST OR SOVIET ORGANIZATION SPONSORING THE VISIT HAS MANAGED TO ARRANGE A VISA OR CORRECT A PREVIOUSLY ISSUED VISA DURING FIRST FULL WORKING DAY AFTER THE WEEKEND OR HOLIDAY IN QUESTION.

2. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE FROM THESE CASES, SOVIET OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR ISSUING VISAS (OVIR) DOES NOT OPERATE ON WEEKENDS AND DOES NOT HAVE DUTY OFFICER AVAILABLE TO ANY EMBASSY IN MOSCOW, IF INDEED IT HAS DUTY OFFICER AT ALL. SOVIET MFA USA DIVISION OFFICIAL TRIFONOV REJECTED CONSOFF SUGGESTION THAT OVIR MAINTAIN SUCH DUTY OFFICER WHEN MATTER WAS DISCUSSED IN CONNECTION WITH RATHLIN DETENTION SEPTEMBER 1972, MOSCOW 9278, 9/13/72.

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3. TELEPHONES INTO MOSCOW ARE GENERALLY AVAILABLE AT BOTH DETENTION FACILITIES NEAR SHEREMETYEVO AIRPORT. THEIR NUMBER IS LIMITED, HOWEVER, AND THEIR USE PRESUPPOSES EITHER SOME RUSSIAN LANGUAGE ABILITY OR KNOWLEDGE OF THE EMBASSY TELEPHONE NUMBER. EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE PERIODICALLY LEFT COPIES OF EMBASSY NUMBER AT BOTH FACILITIES BUT LIKELY THEY ARE OFTEN MISPLACED OR THEIR AVAILABILITY IS DEPENDENT ON SOVIET OFFICIALS OR MATRONS ON DUTY ON GIVEN WEEKEND. (E.G. AN AMERICAN CURRENTLY BEING DETAINED AT AEROFLOT HOTEL FOR HAVING ARRIVED WITHOUT A VISA MANAGED TO TELEPHONE EMBASSY DUTY OFFICER OVER PAST WEEKEND.)

4. EMBASSY IS PREPARED TO RAISE DAVIS' COMPLAINT WITH MFA BUT WOULD FIRST LIKE TO CLARIFY WHETHER DAVISES TRIED TO SECURE EMBASSY TELEPHONE NUMBER AND WERE DENIED IT OR COULD NOT SIMPLY OBTAIN IT. WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO CONFIRM THEY WERE LOCKED "IN A ROOM". NORMALLY SUCH DETAINEES ARE MERELY CONFINED TO A SPECIAL FLOOR OF THE FACILITY. IF IT SEEMS UNLIKELY DEPARTMENT CAN ELICIT THIS INFORMATION FROM DAVISES IN NEAR FUTURE, EMBASSY WILL NONETHELESS RAISE CASE AT MFA, RESTING IT PRIMARILY ON CLEAR ILLEGALITY OF ANY DETENTION FOR REASONS OF A CLERICAL ERROR IN VISA PROCESSING.
MELENCAMP

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